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544 CRESCENT ROAD
CALGARY,. ALBERTA

# GEORGE HODGSON, THE INTERPRETER

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George Hodgson, now 98 years old, spent 39 years on the Sarcee Reserve as Interpreter and Farming Instructor. He retired from this position about 23 years ago and now lives at the home of his daughter Mrs. George Lee near Midnapore.

Mr. Hodgson has some interesting Indian relics which were left to his wife by a Sarcee Chief. This Chief, Big Belly by name, had adopted the Christian religion. He was told that when he went to Heaven he would not need his prized earthly possessions,. This was contrary to the belief of his people that a brave needed equipment for his life on the Happy Hunting Grounds, but Big Belly was true to the Faith he had adopted so instead of having his cherished belongings buried with him he gave them away shortly before his death.

The most interesting item Mr. Hodgson has had is a buffalo hide which contained a history of the Sarcee Tribe. It was divided into seven strips, each strip telling the story of one branch of the Sarcees. One strip tells the doings of the Big Plume group, another of the Big Belly group and so on.

Each drawing represents a great deal. For example a brave leading some horses tells of a successful raid for the purpose of stealing horses - which is regarded as a very honorable and praiseworthy exploit. A hatchet tells of scalps taken.

Mr. Hodgson got an old Indian from the Sarcee Reserve to write out the stories told by these pictures. I believe the Indian died before completing this work.

The original buffalo hide is now in an Eastern Museum but Mr. Hodgson got a copy of it made on two cow hides sewn together.

Other interesting things are some articles used in a Sundance Ceremony. In this ceremony a very good and beautiful daughter of the tribe had to spend nine days in a nest-like affair arranged on top of some poles crossed and tied together in teepee-fashion. She wore a special Sundance hat and she used a certain stick to arrange her clothing while in this retreat. During this time she was not supposed to touch food or drink. When she came down it was her duty to serve the braves with buffalo tongue. For this purpose she used a particular fork.

George Hodgson has the fork, stick and hat. He also possesses a set of the comb and other toilet articles supposed to have been used by the Sundance maiden.

It is claimed that there are just three of these original Sundance hats in existence.

During his years on the Reserve, George Hodgson saw some interesting happenings. Onone occasion he saw a Sundance turn into a Wardance. The Indians were fretting under the confines of the Reserve. They worked themselves into a frenzy on the subject and t then all left the Reserve. The Mounted Police were called out and eventually the Indians drifted peaceably back into their own territory.

At another time a massacre appeared imminent. A little Indian girl was sick and was taken into the Agency buildings. Despite the care she received the girl died. Immediately the superstitious Indians thought that the white people had caused the child's death, so they came down upon the Agency with murder in their hearts. Fortunately the trouble was averted somehow and Peace reigned again.